

Muse of the Pipes: The Aqua Marcia and Aqua Virgo as Roman Poetic Tradition

I. THE AQUA MARCIA

a. Propertius 3.2.11-18:

quod non Taenariis domus est mihi fulta columnis,		“If my house doesn’t rise on pillars of Taenarian marble, and my ceiling is not vaulted with ivory between gilded beams, if I have no fruit trees matching Phaeacia’s orchards nor does a Marcian stream water artificial grottoes ; yet the Muses are my companions, my poems are dear to the reader, and Calliope never wearies of dancing to my rhythms. Happy you who are celebrated in my book, if any woman is: my every poem will be a monument to your beauty.”
nec camera auratas inter eburna trabes,		
nec mea Phaeacas aequant pomaria silvas,		
non operosa rigat Marcius antra liquor;		
at Musae comites et carmina cara legenti,	15	
nec ¹ defessa choris Calliopea meis.		
fortunata, meo si qua's celebrata libello!		
carmina erunt formae tot monumenta tuae.		

b. Propertius 3.22.23-8:

hic, Anio Tiburne, fluis, Clitumnus ab Umbro		“Here you flow, Anio, river of Tibur, Clitumnus from the Umbrian upland, and the Marcian water, eternal construction , the Alban Lake, and that at Nemi, overflowing with leaves, and the health-giving water-nymph drunk by the horse of Pollux. But here horned asps do not glide on scaly bellies, nor does Italian water boil with strange prodigies”
tramite, et aeternum Marcius umor opus,		
Albanus lacus et foliis Nemorensis abundans,	25	
potaque Pollucis nympha salubris equo.		
at non squamoso labuntur ventre cerastae,		
Itala portentis nec furit unda novis;		

c. Martial *Epig.* 9.18:

Est mihi—sitque precor longum te praeside, Caesar—	1	“I have - and I pray I may have it long, Caesar, beneath your guardianship - a tiny country house, and I have, too, a small dwelling in the city. But my curved water-wheel lifts from a shallow valley busy water to bestow on the thirsty garden; the arid house complains that it is freshened by no moisture, though Marcia babbles in my ears with its neighbouring fountain. The water you will give, Augustus, to my household gods will be to me a Castalian spring or a shower of Jove.”
Rus minimum, parvi sunt et in urbe lares.		
Sed de valle brevi, quas det sitientibus hortis,		
Curva laboratas antlia tollit aquas:		
Sicca domus queritur nullo se rore foveri,	5	
Cum mihi vicino Marcia fonte sonet.		
Quam dederis nostris, Auguste, penatibus undam,		
Castalis haec nobis aut Iovis imber erit.		

¹ Heyworth tentatively rejects Baehrens’ conjecture of *nec* and restores *et*, attested in one family of manuscripts.

d. Martial *Epig.* 11.96:

Marcia, non Rhenus, salit hic, Germane: quid obstas	1	“The Marcia, not the Rhine, jets here, German; why
Et puerum prohibes divitis imbre lacus?		obstruct and elbow the boy away from the gush of the
Barbare, non debet, submoto cive, ministro		precious pool? Barbarian, it is not right that a citizen be
Captivam victrix unda levare sitim.		thrust aside, and the conquering water slake a captive’s
		thirst.”

e. Statius *Silv.* 1.3.66-74:

teque, per obliquum penitus quae laberis amnem,		“[why should I tell of] you, Marcia, who glide across the
Marcia, et audaci transcurris flumina plumbo?		river’s depths and in bold lead cross its channels? Shall
an solum Ioniis sub fluctibus Elidis amnem		a fresh-water trail lead only the river of Elis to Aetna’s
dulcis ad Aetnaeos deducat semita portus?		haven beneath Ionian waves? There Anio himself, leaving
illic ipse antris Anien et fonte relicto,	70	his grotto and his spring, in night’s mysterious hour puts off
nocte sub arcana glaucos exutus amictus		his grey-green raiment and leans his breast against the soft
huc illuc fragili prosternit pectora musco,		moss hereabouts, or plunges in all his bulk into the pools
aut ingens in stagna cadit vitreasque natatu		and swimming splashes among the glassy waters.”
plaudit aquas.		

f. Lygdamus = corpus Tibullianum 3.6.57-64:

Naida Bacchus amat: cessas, o lente minister?		“Bacchus loves the Naiad: lazy servant, are you delaying? Let
Temperet annosum Marcia lympa merum.		Marcian water dilute the aged wine. If a silly girl desiring an
Non ego, si fugit nostrae convivia mensae		unknown bed flees the banquets of my table, I would not keep
Ignotum cupiens vana puella torum,	60	on sighing anxiously all night: you boy, go, add stronger wine.
Sollicitus repetam tota suspiria nocte:		Long ago I should have entwined my hair with wreathes, my
Tu puer, i, liquidum fortius adde merum.		temples dripping with Syrian nard.”
Iam dudum Syrio madefactus tempora nardo		
Debueram sertis inplicuisse comas.		

II. THE AQUA VIRGO

a. Ovid *A.A.* 3.383-90:

Sunt illis celeresque pilae iaculumque trochique		“Swift balls, javelins and hoops are men’s, and weapons, and horses made to go in a circle. You the Campus knows not, nor the ice-cold Virgin , nor does the Tuscan river bear you down on its placid stream. But you may, and with profit, walk through the Pompeian shade, when the head is scorched with Virgo’s celestial steeds. Visit the Palace sacred to laurelled Phoebus: it was he that sank in the deep the Paraetonian ships;”
Armaque et in gyros ire coactus equus.		
Nec vos Campus habet, nec vos gelidissima Virgo,	385	
Nec Tuscus placida devehit amnis aqua.		
At licet et prodest Pompeias ire per umbras,		
Virginis aetheriis cum caput ardet equis;		
Visite laurigero sacrata Palatia Phoebo:		
Ille Paraetonicas mersit in alta rates;	390	

b. Ovid *Fast.* 1.461-8:

Proxima prospiciet Tithono nupta relicto	461	“When Aurora next leaves Tithonous’ couch, she shall behold the pontifical rite of the Arcadian goddess. You too, sister of Turnus, the same morning enshrined at the spot where the Virginal water circles the Campus . From where shall I learn the causes and manner of these rites? Who will pilot my ship in mid-ocean? Enlighten me yourself, o you who take your name from song, be kind to my undertaking, lest I should fail to give you due honor.”
Arcadiae sacrum pontificale deae.		
te quoque lux eadem, Turni soror, aede recepit,		
hic ubi Virginea Campus obitur aqua.		
unde petam causas horum moremque sacrorum?	465	
deriget in medio quis mea vela freto?		
ipsa mone, quae nomen habes a carmine ductum,		
propositoque fave, ne tuus erret honor.		

c. Ovid *Tr.* 3.12.21-6:

nunc ubi perfusa est oleo labente iuventus,		“now the young men, reeking of slippery oil, are bathing wearied limbs in the Virgin water . The stage is full of life, and partizanship ablaze with warring passions, and three theatres roar in the place of three forums. Ah! four times happy – yes, countless times happy – is he who may enjoy the unforbidden city!”
defessos artus Virgine tinguit aqua.		
scaena viget studiisque favor distantibus ardet,		
proque tribus resonant terna theatra foris.		
o quater et quotiens non est numerare, beatum,	25	
non interdicta cui licet Vrbe frui!		

d. Ovid *Pont.* 1.8.35-40:

Nunc fora, nunc aedes, nunc marmore tecta theatra,	35	“Now the fora, now the temples, now the theatres sheathed in marble, now every portico with its levelled ground comes before me; now the greensward of the Campus that looks towards the lovely gardens, the pools, the canals, and the Virginal water . But, I suppose, the delights of the city have been taken from me in my wretchedness in such fashion that I may have at least what country joys I will!”
nunc subit aequata porticus omnis humo,		
gramina nunc Campi pulchros spectantis in hortos		
stagnaue et euripi Virgineusque liquor.		
At, puto, sic Urbis misero est erepta uoluptas,		
quolibet ut saltem rure frui liceat!	40	

e. Martial *Epig.* 5.20.1-10:

Si tecum mihi, care Martialis,	1	“If you and I, dear Martial, were permitted to enjoy careless days, if permitted to dispose an idle time, and both alike to have leisure for genuine life, we should not know the halls or mansions of men of power, nor worrying lawsuits and the anxious forum, nor lordly ancestral busts; but the promenade, the lounges, the bookshops, the Campus, the colonnade, the garden’s shade, the Virgo, the warm baths - these should be our haunts always, these our tasks.”
Securis liceat frui diebus,		
Si disponere tempus otiosum		
Et verae pariter vacare vitae:		
Nec nos atria, nec domos potentum,	5	
Nec litis tetricas forumque triste		
Nossemus, nec imagines superbas;		
Sed gestatio, fabulae, libelli,		
Campus, porticus, umbra, Virgo, thermae,		
Haec essent loca semper, hi labores.	10	

f. Martial *Epig.* 7.32.7-14:

Non pila, non follis, non te paganica thermis		“No hand-ball, no bladder-ball, no feather-stuffed ball makes you ready for the warm bath, nor the blunted stroke upon the unarmed stump; nor do you fetch out squared arms smeared with sticky ointment, nor, darting to and fro, snatch the dusty scrimmage-ball, but you run only by the clear waters of the Virgin , or where the Bull warms his passion for his Sidonian love. To trifle in various sports to which every open space is devoted, when one can run, is sloth.”
Praeparat, aut nudi stipitis ictus hebes,		
Vara nec in lento ceromate bracchia tendis,		
Non harpasta vagus pulverulenta rapis,	10	
Sed curris niveas tantum prope Virginis undas,		
Aut ubi Sidonio taurus amore calet.		
Per varias artes, omnis quibus area servit,		
Ludere, cum liceat currere, pigritia est.		

g. Martial *Epig.* 11.47:

Omnia femineis quare dilecta catervis	1	“Why does Lattara avoid all the baths popular with the female crowds? In order not to fuck. Why does he not take slow walks in the shadow of Pompey's Theater or seek out the thresholds of the Isis temples? In order not to fuck. Why does he drench his body, covered in Lacedaemonian mud, with the ice-cold Virgin? In order not to fuck. Since he avoids contact with the female gender in such a way, why does Lattara lick pussy? In order not to fuck.
Balnea devitat Lattara? Ne futuat.		
Cur nec Pompeia lentus spatiat in umbra,		
Nec petit Inachidos limina? Ne futuat.		
Cur Lacedaemonio luteum ceromate corpus	5	
Perfundit gelida Virgine? Ne futuat.		
Cum sic feminei generis contagia vitet,		
Cur lingit cunnum Lattara? Ne futuat.		

h. Martial *Epig.* 14.163 *Tintinabulum*:

Bell

Redde pilam: sonat aes thermarum. Ludere pergis?	1	“Give up the ball: the bell of the warm baths is sounding. Do you go on playing? You want to go home after a bath in the Virgin alone. ”
Virgine vis sola lotus abire domum.		

III. CONFLUENCE

a. Statius *Silv.* 1.5.19-30:

non vos quae culpa decus infamastis aquarum,		“You who with guilt have defamed the honor of streams, I do not care to solicit: go far from here, Salmacis, with your deceiving fountain, and the river of Cebrenis left forlorn, that grief made dry, and the ravisher of Hercules’ young charge. But you nymphs who dwell in Latium and on the seven hills and make Tiber swell with your fresh waters, you whom headling Anio delights and the Virgo destined to welcome the swimmer, and Marcia that brings down the Marsian snow and cold, you whose travelling waves flood through the lofty masonry and are carried high in air over countless arches - yours is the work I would sing, yours the home of which my gentle verse speaks.”
sollicitare iuvat; procul hinc et fonte doloso	20	
Salmacis et viduae Cebrenidos arida luctu		
flumina et Herculei praedatrix cedat alumni.		
vos mihi quae Latium septenaque culmina, Nymphae,		
incolitis Thybrimque novis attollitis undis,		
quas praeceps Anien atque exceptura natatus	25	
Virgo iuvat Marsasque nives et frigora ducens		
Marcia, praecelsis quarum vaga molibus unda		
crescit et innumero pendens transmittitur arcu:		
vestrum opus aggredimur, vestra est quam carmine molli		
pando domus.		

b. Martial *Epig.* 6.42.3-21:

Nullae sic tibi blandientur undae,		<p>“No other waters will so allure you, not even the springs of Aponus unknown to women; not mild Sinuessa, and the waves of steaming Passer, or towering Anxur; not the waters of Phoebus, and peerless Baiae. Nowhere is the sunlight sheen so cloudless; the very light is longer there, and from no spot does the day withdraw more lingeringly. There the quarries of Taygetus are green, and in varied beauty vie the rocks which the Phrygian and Libyan has more deeply hewn. The rich alabaster pants with dry heat, and snake-stone is warm with a subtle fire. If Lacadaemonian methods please you, you can content yourself with dry warmth, and then plunge in the fresh Virgo or Marcia, which glistens so bright and clear you would not suspect any water there, but would fancy the Lygdian marble shines empty.”</p>
Nec fontes Aponi rudes puellis,		
Non mollis Sinuessa fervidique	5	
Fluctus Passeris aut superbus Anxur,		
Non Phoebi vada principesque Baiae.		
Nusquam tam nitidum vacat serenum:		
Lux ipsa est ibi longior, diesque		
Nulla tardius a loco recedit.	10	
Illic Taygeti virent metalla		
Et certant vario decore saxa,		
Quae Phryx et Libys altius cecidit.		
Siccus pinguis onyx anhelat aestus		
Et flamma tenui calent ophitae:	15	
Ritus si placeant tibi Laconum,		
Contentus potes arido vapore		
Cruda Virgine Marciave mergi;		
Quae tam candida, tam serena lucet,		
Ut nullas ibi suspiceris undas	20	
Et credas vacuum nitere lygdon.		

Propertius translations adapted from Heyworth 2007; Lygdamus translation my own. All other translations adapted from the appropriate Loeb volumes.

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